

## THE PLAN WORKS

The purpose of LAFLA's strategic planning is not to plan for its own sake, but to take action with impact.

The work we have begun tries to avoid two obstacles to making an impact: One is becoming consumed with intake. If we are driven solely by what comes in the door, we will respond only to the surface symptoms, overlook the interaction of legal problems, and not effect real change. The second is to become divorced from our clients' needs. If we are driven by funding sources or theories, and are not accountable to the client community, we may have great ideas, but lack the allies and information to achieve systemic results. The first mistake offers access without lasting impact; the second strives for impact, but without the knowledge of community needs to be effective.

LAFLA's strategic plan draws on input from the community and staff, builds on our strengths, and adheres to our core values and mission. We focus on improving: client services and access, skill development and supervision, internal functioning, and our image in the community. During 2001 and 2002 LAFLA implemented an ambitious and wide ranging Strategic Plan that embraced a client and community-centered approach and included participation by all levels of staff.

This is a partial list of highlights and accomplishments:

### Community Outreach

- Clinics at public housing projects on employee rights, drivers license reinstatements, and other obstacles to employment.
- LAFLA advocates taught two semester-long courses on *Youth and the Law* at a Los Angeles middle school.
- Two Youth Law Days brought community leaders to young people in housing projects to discuss issues that affect them.
- Outreach workers promote healthy home environments by educating clients and advocating for changes in municipal codes.

### Substantive Expansion

- Collaboration with civil rights organizations on joint projects.
- Housing advocacy is more diverse and affirmative, including suits against slumlords and improving state and local housing policies.
- Cross-unit work in areas of child support, child care, employment and banking and finance.

### Training and Education

- Forums on civil rights practice, the condition of low-income children, the effects of Sept. 11<sup>th</sup> on the economy and civil rights, and lessons ten years after L.A.'s civil unrest.
- New position of Director of Advocacy and Training has resulted in more substantive and skills training opportunities.

### Internal Improvements

- Secretaries, receptionists and screeners meet regularly to improve consistency, staff skills, and client access.
- Best legal services web site in the nation.
- LiNC intranet established.
- Implementing developmental work plans for staff.